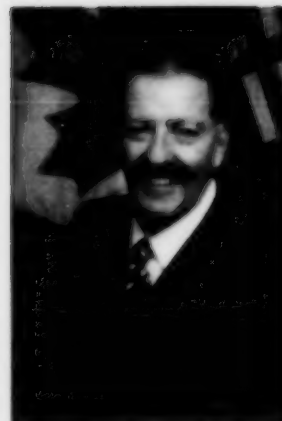


Spring into Summer Fire Safety Campaign - 2008



Alberta *Alberta Emergency
Management Agency*

Message from the Managing Director Alberta Emergency Management Agency



Dear Albertans:

With the arrival of spring, many of us are starting to make time for spring cleaning, yard work, home repairs, and outdoor activities, some of which can present fire safety hazards. Emergency responders are often called upon to respond to incidents related to these hazards. The Alberta Emergency Management Agency's "Spring into Summer Fire Safety Campaign" offers an excellent opportunity for emergency services to inform and educate communities about fire safety during the spring and summer months.

This campaign kit focuses on a number of topics including outdoor and camping safety, the safe use of barbecues, flammable liquids and gases as well as information about how to prevent wildland fires.

We hope that when the time comes to start using the barbecue, camping equipment and lawn mower, you will give some thought to this advice from the Agency and the Wildfire Prevention Section of Alberta Sustainable Resource Development — it could keep you a lot safer this summer.

If you or your family are caught in an emergency or disaster, are you prepared? Do you have a 72-hour kit? An emergency plan? For more information please visit the Alberta Emergency Management Agency website at www.aema.alberta.ca

For more information on fire safety and a copy of this kit, visit the Alberta Emergency Management Agency website at www.aema.alberta.ca, or phone 780-422-9000 (toll-free in Alberta at 310-0000).

Sincerely,

Original signed by

David Hodgins
Managing Director
Alberta Emergency Management Agency

Alberta - A Province Prepared

Message from the Acting Fire Commissioner
Alberta Emergency Management Agency

Dear Fire Chiefs,

This year's Spring into Summer Fire Safety Campaign from May to August is designed to encourage fire and emergency service departments to raise awareness in their communities about the increased risk from fire hazards that can arise during the summer season. This campaign kit has been developed to help your department in this task.



Inside, you will find a number of articles to help you promote fire prevention and safety in your community. Please use and duplicate the contents of this campaign kit to support your summer fire safety activities, and encourage your local newspapers, radio and TV stations to use this information. As well, you can find a selection of fire safety tip sheets on the Alberta Emergency Management Agency website at www.aema.alberta.ca

I encourage every Alberta fire and emergency service department to participate in this year's Spring into Summer Fire Safety Campaign. By increasing public awareness of fire hazards and how to react in a fire emergency, you can help prevent fires, save lives and protect property and the environment.

For more information contact the AEMA at 780-422-9000 (dial toll free 310-0000).

Best wishes for a fire-safe summer season.

Yours in fire safety,

Original signed by

Ernie Polsom
A/Fire Commissioner
Alberta Emergency Management Agency

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Use your common sense to prevent outdoor fires

A fire hazard is an object or an activity that has the potential to cause a fire. A few of the common fire hazards are outlined below and consumers are encouraged to use their common sense to help stop fire hazards from becoming fire incidents.

Smoking: These days people tend to smoke outside homes and buildings irrespective of the season. All activities and items used to smoke can be fire hazards, but none more so than carelessly tossing a cigarette butt on the ground. Dry leaves and vegetation can act as fuel to a discarded cigarette butt and start a fire. Also leaving cigarette lighters or matchers lying around is almost an invitation to a curious child to play with fire. **To help control these fire hazards:**

- ☐ Make sure to put the cigarette out - all the way.
- ☐ Use large, deep ashtrays partially filled with water.
- ☐ Keep cigarette lighters and matches out of the reach of children.
- ☐ Practice good yard keeping by removing debris and dry vegetation.
- ☐ Know that peat-moss in pots can smolder from discarded butts.

- ♣ **Barbecues:** Heat or flames from a barbeque can ignite nearby vegetation, wood, vinyl siding, paper towels and similar items. **Common sense prevention tips include:**
 - ☐ Planning the barbecue activity with safety in mind.
 - ☐ Keep barbecues at a safe distance from anything in its surroundings that can burn.
 - ☐ Keep young children away from the barbecue to prevent play.
- ♣ **Gasoline:** Vapours from gasoline can catch fire even from a pilot light, a lit cigarette, or a spark. If gasoline vapors ignite, one gallon can explode with the same force as 14 sticks of dynamite. **To help control these fire hazards:**
 - ☐ Never use gasoline to speed up a slow campfire or a charcoal barbecue.
 - ☐ Use approved storage containers, use suitable funnels when re-fuelling and avoid spilling and smoking nearby.
 - ☐ Ensure adequate ventilation when dispensing gasoline.
- ♣ **Burn injuries:** Burns can happen from contact with hot objects or flames. If you burn yourself, run the affected area under cool water for five minutes. If your burn is serious (charring, blistering) seek medical attention right away.
- ♣ **Arsonists and vandals:** Watch out for unfamiliar and suspicious people and activities in the neighbourhood. Informing the police of them can prevent arson and vandalism fires which will help keep your neighbourhood safe.

Barbecue with care

Gas barbecues

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions when fitting the gas cylinder to the barbecue. Use proper wrenches to tighten connections. Hint: Fittings on old style propane cylinders have left-hand threads and are tightened by turning in a counter-clockwise direction. New style propane cylinder fittings do not require a wrench and tighten in a clockwise direction.
- If your barbecue connection area has an "o" ring, check it every time you connect the cylinder. Replace missing, cracked or damaged "o" rings.
- After connecting the gas supply hose to the barbecue, open the propane cylinder or natural gas supply valve. Check for gas leaks by applying a soapy solution over the connections and hose. Soap bubbles will form if there is a leak.
- If a leak or fire occurs, turn off the gas supply valve immediately.
- If using a match, always light the match before turning on the gas to prevent an excessive gas buildup. If the barbecue is equipped with an electronic igniter, follow directions on the control panel.
- Always ensure that the cylinder valves are fully open or fully closed.
- Propane cylinders **MUST** be retested every 10 years. If you are refused a refill, chances are your cylinder is past the retest date. Re-certification of the tank can be arranged through most propane filling stations.
- To avoid a possible fire or explosion – **NEVER** light a gas barbecue with a leaking hose, a leaking connection or with the barbecue lid closed.
- Never store extra propane cylinders under your barbecue or inside any structure. Excess heat may over pressurize the cylinder and cause it to release propane from the cylinder relief valve.
- Cylinders must be kept upright, whether in use or in storage and during transportation.
- When transporting a cylinder, secure it in an upright position in a ventilated space with a safety plug (a POL plug) in place. Keep the trunk open to allow air circulation. A POL plug will prevent gas from leaking when the valve is accidentally turned on, and is available through your local dealer.
- Prevent grease from dripping onto the hoses or cylinder as grease buildup could be a potential fire hazard.
- Ensure all valves are completely turned off when the barbecue is not in use.

Charcoal barbecues

- Use only an approved fire starter fluid designed for barbecue grills. **DO NOT** use gasoline. Store the remaining fire starter fluid in a safe place.

- Be sure that fire starter fluids are not accessible to children as they are poisonous when swallowed. Special childproof caps are available at your local dealer. Solid fuel fire starters or electric fire starters are also available.
- Prevent fire hazards by keeping the barbecuing area free of twigs, dried leaves and paper products such as paper cups, plates and napkins.
- Place the charcoal barbecue in a well-ventilated area as poisonous gases, (especially carbon monoxide) are released from burning charcoal briquettes.
- Before disposing of charcoal ash, ensure it is thoroughly extinguished. Live coals or hot embers can start a fire – be extremely cautious!
- Under the Alberta Fire Code, the use of Solid Fuel (charcoal or wood) barbecues is not permitted on balconies in buildings with more than two dwelling units.

General information

- When purchasing a barbecue, select one that bears the CSA, ITS, ULC or UL label. Follow manufacturer's instructions and ensure that any repairs are carried out by a trained professional.
- Keep barbecues away from anything that can burn such as your home, car, dry vegetation, deck rails, wood balconies, etc.
- Use long handled barbecue tongs and brushes to put extra distance between yourself and the intense heat of the barbecue.
- **NEVER** allow children to use or play around a gas barbecue.
- Always have a fire extinguisher, baking soda and water available to put out an accidental fire.
- Do not wear loose clothing near a barbecue as flaming grease can ignite clothing.
- When barbecuing, protect yourself by wearing a heavy apron and an oven mitt that fits high up over your forearm.
- If you get burned, run cool water over the burn for 10 to 15 minutes. **DO NOT** use butter or salve on burns — these products seal in heat and can cause further damage to the tissue. If the burn is serious, seek medical attention immediately.
- Never use barbecues inside the home.

Test Yourself: Gas Barbecue Basics

(Adapted from the Canada Safety Council website: www.safety-council.org/quiz/barbecueq.html)

1. When is it safe to use a propane barbecue in a garage?

- a. If it is too rainy or cold to stay outdoors for long.
- b. On the condition that you do not leave it unattended.
- c. If it is the location most convenient to the eating area.
- d. Never.

2. How do you test for leaks?

- a. Brush leak detector solution onto connections and valves. Rising bubbles indicate a leak.
- b. Use a match or lighter. A flame indicates there is a leak.
- c. Smell the apparatus. A distinct odour like rotten eggs or boiling cabbage indicates a leak.
- d. Use any of the above methods.

3. What maintenance is necessary before using a barbecue for the first time in the spring?

- a. Thoroughly inspect, clean and repair it.
- b. Replace worn or rusted parts.
- c. Check all cylinder connections for leaks.
- d. All of the above.

4. When lighting your barbecue, which of the following actions comes last?

- a. Turn on the burner.
- b. Open the lid.
- c. Use the igniter switch.
- d. Use the service valve on the propane cylinder to turn on the gas supply.

5. Where should you store cylinders when they are not in use?

- a. In an enclosed space, such as a garage or shed, which you can lock.
- b. Outdoors away from sources of ignition, in a well-ventilated area.
- c. Under or near the gas grill where they are convenient.
- d. Any of the above locations would be safe.

Answers to Gas Barbecue Basics

1. **d.** Only use your gas barbecue outdoors in an open, well-ventilated area, at least three metres (10 feet) away from windows or doors, far from combustibles or anything that might obstruct the flow of air around the grill. It is never safe to leave a barbecue unattended, no matter where it is located.

2. **a.** Use a commercial leak detector solution or a mixture of 50% liquid soap and 50% water. Repair all leaks before using the grill. *Never use matches or lighters to check for leaks!*

3. **d.** As with all such equipment, make sure your barbecue is clean, in good repair and properly adjusted. If the fittings, flex hose or burners are worn or rusted, replace them. Replace any missing or worn "O" rings. Use a flexible brush (made for the purpose) to clean the tubes between the gas valve and the burner.

4. **c.** With the lid open, turn the cylinder service valve on. Next, turn on the burner. Only then, use the igniter switch.

5. **b.** Store cylinders outdoors away from sources of ignition, in a secure, well-ventilated area, always in an upright, vertical position. Never bring cylinders indoors or into an enclosed space, or keep them where they could be exposed to high temperatures.

Propane safety

(Adapted from Canada Safety Council Magazine – Safety Canada, Vol. xlvii, No.2)

Camping, cottaging and meals on the barbecue are Canada's summertime passions. In addition, more and more Canadians travel by RV during the summer. Propane is the energy source that often powers these activities. It is versatile, economical and safe, and can be taken where no other fuels can go. Stored as a liquid and used as a gas, it will cook meals, heat the cottage or trailer, ensure a supply of hot water, and even refrigerate food.

According to Ann Marie Hann, President of the Propane Gas Association of Canada, propane appliances are growing in popularity. "People who use propane all year round are usually familiar with how to handle it properly," she says. "But many Canadians use it mainly on vacation or for the barbecue. As with any fuel, safety is always important, and special care is needed when reacquainting yourself with a product not used for several months."

Propane is a colourless and odourless gas. An odourant is added so you can detect a leak by a strong, distinct odour like rotten eggs or boiling cabbage. Leaking propane is heavier than air and will flow to low-lying areas. If you suspect a leak or smell an odour, turn off the supply of propane at the cylinder and *leave the area immediately*. Do not turn light switches or flashlights on or off, or operate phones. Once you are well away from the area, phone your service supplier.

Propane incidents are rare, in part because of strictly enforced safety regulations. All cylinders must have a decal identifying the contents as a flammable gas. In Canada, they must be inspected and re-qualified or replaced every 10 years. A date stamp on the collar of the cylinder indicates when it was last qualified. Only a qualified technician may fill your cylinder. It is illegal for an attendant to fill an outdated cylinder, or to fill a cylinder beyond 80% capacity. For many summer chefs, gas barbecues are the appliance of choice. They require a safety check, cleaning and maintenance at the start of the season, and good ventilation while in use.

"It's absolutely essential for the tubes to be clear and in good repair," notes Ivan Tanner of the Ottawa Fire Service. "Spiders and other insects love to build nests in them and that can cause dangerous blockages."

When using the barbecue, turn the cylinder service valve on first, and turn it off first. When you finish, ensure no propane is left in the hose and then close the burner control valves. Make sure the gas grill is shut off and has completely cooled before covering it.

Tips for Transporting, Storing and Handling Propane Cylinders

- Transport cylinders in a secured, upright position, and in a well ventilated space.
- When transporting or storing disconnected cylinders, plug or cap all cylinder outlets.
- Keep cylinders out of the passenger space or living area of your RV or camper.
- Store cylinders outdoors, and off the ground on a base that will not burn.
- Never smoke while handling a propane cylinder.

Burn injuries

If You Are Burned...

1. Cool burns with water

Immediately pour cool water on burns and soak them for at least three to five minutes (30-40 minutes for chemical injury). Do not use ice. Ice may cause more damage, stick to the burn and remove the skin

2. Stop, Drop and Roll

If your clothing catches on fire "STOP, DROP, & ROLL." Flames must be smothered. For scalds, immediately remove hot, wet clothing.

3. No ointments or butter

Use only cool water on burns. Ointments, butter, creams and salves allow the burn to retain heat, may cause infection, and may hinder medical evaluation.

4. Cover the burn

Apply a soft, clean, dry dressing, bandage or sheet to the burned area. Do not break blisters, this could let germs into the wound. Cover burn victims and keep them warm.

Electrical Injury

DO NOT touch the injured person until the source of power has been disconnected. Primary concerns are airway, breathing, circulation, and cervical spine immobilization. Electricity can cause the heart and breathing to stop. Assess for injuries and begin first aid. Internal injuries may not be evident as electricity can cause severe damage inside the body when it enters and exits.

Chemical Injury

With a cloth, gently brush any dry chemicals off the skin. Remove clothing and contact lenses, if necessary, before flushing with water for at least 20 minutes or until pain stops. Be careful not to flush the chemical on to other parts of the body. Read container labels or consult with the Poison Control Center before administering first aid.

When should I see a doctor?

If the burn is larger than the size of a quarter, see a doctor. Infants, young children and the elderly are endangered by even small burns. The hands, feet, face (especially eyes) and genitalia are critical areas. Electricity, chemicals and smoke or toxic fumes complicate a burn injury. Certain existing conditions, such as diabetes, and mental and physical impairment, can also cause complications.

(Source: Burn Awareness Coalition, Encino, California and The American Burn Association)

Preventing children from playing with fire

Developmental studies have shown that 40 to 50 per cent of children have experimented or misused fire out of curiosity. Recent studies in the US have identified why children engage in this behaviour.

- **Curiosity /experimentation:** As a part of exploring and experiencing the world around them, children as young as three years of age may play with fire if fire starting materials such as lighters or an open flame are within easy access.
- **False sense of control:**
 - Children under the age of 10 may not understand how fast a fire can spread. They are unable to conceptualize how a small candle flame could spread quickly and engulf a whole house. The ability to blow a candle flame out in one breath, for example, can give a child a false sense of control over fire.
 - Exposure to fire activities: When parents and caregivers give children tasks such as collecting fire wood to start a camp fire, children may perceive this as permission to engage in fire activities. These children may not be able to manage a fire that gets out of control.
 - Movies that show people walking through buildings on fire without any protective gear can also impart a false sense of control over fire to children who may not recognize the difference between reality and fiction.
- **Ready access to fire starting materials:** A cigarette lighter or a box of matches left on a coffee table, a lit candle left in a room where children are unsupervised can be an invitation to play with fire.
- **Lack of supervision:** Although this can include situations where children are left unattended by parents and caregivers for long periods of time, it also includes short lapses in everyday situations when children are left alone such as when adults take showers, answer the phone or wake up late on a Saturday morning when children are already awake and active..

To prevent children from playing with fire:

- **Model appropriate behaviour around fire:** This is based on the fact that children are always watching and trying to imitate the attitudes and behaviours of grown-ups. Exercise proper care and caution while using fire at home – cooking, lighting the fireplace or outdoors – lighting a camp fire or the barbeque can be a lesson in fire safety for children who are watching. Impatient behaviour and a cavalier attitude for example, when trying to light a camp fire that stubbornly refuses to start by adding gasoline or lighter fluid can convey the wrong fire safety lesson to children.
- **Restrict access:** It is the parent/caregiver's responsibility to keep cigarette lighters and matches in a locked box stored high and away from children's reach. Novelty lighters that resemble toys can lead children to play with fire. Parents and caregivers must be especially vigilant to prevent access to these items in the home.
- **Clear rules and consequences:** Children must be taught at home that cigarette lighters, matches, lit candles, a hot stove or a lit fire place are for adult use only. If

children find lighters or matches they should be asked not to touch them and to tell a grownup.

- **Assign responsibility:** Parents and caregivers need to carefully consider the most appropriate age at which a child is able to handle fire and know what to do if something goes wrong. Child fireplay expert and Chair of National Fire Protection Association - Education Section Paul Schwartzman, says that it is only at about the age of 10 that children are able to understand the consequences of fire and it could be at age 13 when children develop the capacity to manipulate ideas and concepts.
- **Education:** Children can learn fire safety at home and at school. While parents and caregivers have a role to educate and be good role models at home, they can also encourage teachers to teach fire prevention and safety to their children. Education can include topics such as what things can burn, the speed with which a fire can spread, the power of a single match, consequences of fireplay in terms of financial, legal, loss of things, injury, death and loss of trust and friendships.

Child fire setters: Parents and caregivers should seek help from the local fire department if they have a child who has a tendency to set fires deliberately. Such behaviour could be a "cry for help" and may require professional help to address.

Adapted from a web seminar presented in March 2008 by the Home Safety Council:
http://www.homesafetycouncil.org/expert_network/expertnetworkwebinars_march08.aspx

Landscaping/Gardening

To help prevent fires in your yard and around your house:

- Trim tree limbs so they don't hang over your roof
- Keep eaves and gutters free of leaves and other debris that may burn easily.
- Clear weeds, brush and other flammable vegetation at least 10 metres away from your home
- Store firewood away from all structures.
- Check with local authorities before burning trash or debris outside. If you do decide to burn brush, closely supervise the fire, keep a garden hose running nearby and keep children and pets far away from the area.

Grass Fires and Trash Burning

Outdoor burning can be very dangerous this time of year because vegetation is very dry and it burns easily. If you are going to burn, please be careful and follow these basic tips:

- Check with your local fire department to obtain information about burning regulations and permits.
- Burn debris and other approved material in a burn barrel in accordance with your fire permit.
- Consider the prevailing wind direction and clearance from buildings and vehicles to help prevent fires from spreading to valuable property.
- Clear away all flammable and combustible materials at least three metres around the container. If you are living on a farm, clear away all material for at least 30 metres.
- Keep a rake, shovel, water and extinguisher near by.
- Always watch your fire. Never leave the area. That way you can spot and put out fires that may occur.
- Always keep a hose within reach of your fire.
- When you leave, make sure the fire is out.

Gasoline

In Alberta, from 2002-06, there was a total of 1,614 fires involving gasoline reported to the Fire Commissioner at the AEMA. These fires caused 23 deaths, 92 injuries and \$24 million in property losses. Most of these fires were the result of leaking gasoline from equipment, appliances, vehicles, fuel spillage or improper use near ignition sources, such as open flames or sparks, which ignited gasoline vapours. Nearly 50 per cent of the deaths involved motor vehicle crashes involving gasoline ignition.

Store gasoline outside the home, preferably in a locked, detached shed, and store just enough to power your gasoline-fueled equipment. Keep gasoline inside a clearly marked container that is labeled and approved for gasoline storage, and out of reach of children. Ensure gasoline and all flammable liquids are kept away from heat sources or flames. Only use gasoline as a motor fuel, never as a stain remover or for other purposes.

To transport gasoline in an automobile to and from the filling station, place it in a sealed, approved container in the trunk with the trunk lid propped open and drive directly to the fueling site. Take a direct route back home, and never store gasoline in a vehicle.

Fueling gas powered equipment

- Do **NOT** smoke when you use gasoline.
- Move equipment away from combustibles before fueling.
- Fuel outdoors in a well-ventilated area.
- Before starting the motor, move the equipment at least three metres away from the fueling spot. This prevents vapours from igniting.
- Never refuel your mower when the engine is running. Cool the motor before refueling.
- Wipe up gasoline spills.
- Store gasoline in ventilated areas in tightly closed, safe cans, away from children, sparks or flame sources.

Electric powered mowers

- Check the cord frequently to ensure it is not cut or frayed. Replace if necessary.
- If you must use an extension with your mower, be sure to use only an approved outside cable-type extension.

Camping safety

Every year, people in Alberta are injured from being burned while camping. According to a study of burn patients admitted to the University of Alberta, in Northern Alberta alone, 74 per cent of all camping injuries to children were due to burns. These numbers are even higher for adults. The two major causes of burns were children walking or falling on open flames (34 per cent) and combustibles being poured onto open flames (30 per cent). Nearly 50 per cent of these burn patients were under four years old. The severity of the burns varied widely, though in most cases the burns were far more severe in adults than in children.

When visiting Alberta's backcountry, please be safe around campfires. Remember, even a small campfire has the potential to become a wildfire. Prevention is still the best way to avoid camping related fires and burn injuries. Follow the simple preventive tips below to enjoy a fire safe camping season.

Campfires

- Ensure there is not a fire ban restricting campfires before you begin.
- Clear the area around your campfire of all debris for at least one metre.
- Never use gasoline to start a campfire. An explosion will result.
- Use your campfire only for cooking or warmth and keep your campfire small.
- Build your campfire downwind, away from your tent, clearing away all dry vegetation and digging a pit surrounded by rocks.
- Look for signs that warn of potential fire hazards in provincial and national forests and campgrounds, and always obey park service regulations.
- Never leave your campfire unattended.
- **NEVER** leave children unattended near a campfire.
- Keep a ready supply of water nearby.
- Stop adding wood to the fire well before leaving the site, let the fire burn down, spread the remains evenly in the fire pit, and slowly add water to soak the fire, stir the ashes, and soak again. Test the campfire for any heat before leaving the site.
- When using propane lanterns during the camping season or at any other time, ensure that the connection between the lantern and the propane cylinder is leak-proof to prevent gas from escaping and igniting unexpectedly, posing a potential fire and injury hazard. This hazard can occur during the lighting or normal use of the lantern.

Tents

Safety standards apply to camping tents, play tents, dining shelters and ice-fishing tents, under Health Canada's Hazardous Products Act. These standards require a permanently affixed label on each tent, indicating the tent fabric is flame-resistant, and providing other safety related information. Look for this label when buying a tent. Please remember that tents made of flame-resistant fabric are not fire-proof. The fabric will burn if left in continuous contact with any flame source.

- Set up tents at a safe distance and upwind from the campfire.
- Never use matches, candles or open flames in your tent.
- Use battery operated camping equipment, such as flashlights and lanterns inside the tent.
- Never refuel camping appliances in your tent.
- Never cook inside your tent.
- **DO NOT** smoke inside your tent.
- Never store flammable liquids in your tent.

Camping Trailers

- Check and maintain all gas connections and fume vents.
- Keep all combustibles away from cooking and heating equipment.
- Extinguish smoking materials before going to bed. Place the ashes in a metal container and soak them with water.
- Develop a fire escape plan and keep a small axe handy for emergency escapes.
- Keep a fire extinguisher handy when cooking, and keep one by the trailer exit door at all times.

Boating

- Before fueling your boat, make sure to extinguish smoking materials and shut down all motors, fans and heating devices.
- Be sure the fueling nozzle is grounded to the fuel intake and don't fill to capacity – leave room for expansion.
- Wipe up fuel spills immediately and check the bilge for fuel leakage and odours.
- After fueling and before starting the motor, ventilate with the blower for at least four minutes.
- Consider installing a smoke alarm inside your covered boat and test the battery before using the boat each time. Replace the battery with a fresh one at least once a year.
- Only use portable stoves and heaters specifically designed for marine use.

Vacations

Before you leave the house

- Check to make sure that all stoves and electrical appliances have been turned off or disconnected.
- Unplug all televisions and radios as lightning storms or sudden electrical surges could cause a fire in this equipment.

When you return home

- Check to make sure smoke alarms are still functioning.

Chimeneyas

Chimeneyas are a Mexican style, free standing, portable outdoor fireplace that may be constructed of either metal or clay materials.

These portable outdoor fireplaces are imported from Mexico and are being distributed through a variety of venues. The safety of these fireplaces being used in Canada has not been evaluated; therefore, all buyers should be aware of the potential hazards of open air fires.

The Alberta Building Code and Fire Code do not regulate these fireplaces. However, outdoor backyard fire pits are likely to be regulated by local municipal bylaws.

Most municipalities have bylaws that prescribe the distances between a backyard fire pit and buildings, property lines and combustible materials as well as having proper screens for spark arresters.

Persons using a chimenea in their yard need to check with their local fire department on how to comply with the local bylaws.

Safety tips

- Do not use flammable liquids such as gasoline or lighter fluid to kindle a fire.
- Do not use chimeneas on or near a wooden deck, fence or combustible vegetation.
- Keep children and pets away from hot chimeneas.
- Check the chimenea for cracks or wear and tear that may cause the fireplace to collapse.
- Follow instructions provided with the units.

What do you do if you have a fire in your car or truck?

If there were a fire in your vehicle, would you know what to do? Knowing how to prevent a fire can save your car or truck. Knowing how to respond can save your life.

Car and truck fires are common in Alberta. From 2002–06, there were 5,664 such fires reported to the Fire Commissioner at the Alberta Emergency Management Agency. These fires resulted in 22 deaths, 44 injuries, and \$39 million in property loss. "Trucks" referred to in this article include light trucks, vans and single body units carrying non-flammable cargo.

Most often, fires originate in the engine area (18%), passenger area (15%), control area (4%) and fuel area/line (4%). In both car and truck fires, the leading causes were part failure, leak, or break (17%), arson or vandalism fires (21%), and electrical short circuits (13%). Often, the most common material to first ignite in car and truck was gasoline (18%). Although collisions caused only 3% of car and truck fires, they accounted for 50% of the deaths.

Tips to prevent car and truck fires

- Most car and truck fires happen in the engine area (about 60%), followed by the passenger compartment (about 12%) and control/dash area (7%). The vast majority of car and truck fires can be prevented with a little maintenance and care.
- Check all fuel lines frequently and fix any leaks as soon as you find them. Oil, gasoline and hydraulic fluids are highly combustible; all they need is an ignition source. Whenever you smell gasoline, it's critical to locate the source immediately and resolve the problem to avoid buildup of flammable fumes.
- Transport gasoline in containers that meet minimum safety requirements. Experts recommend carrying the container in your trunk - preferably with the trunk lid partially open to vent fumes. Don't stop on other errands and never store gasoline in your vehicle.
- If you repair the electrical system yourself, be sure to insulate any splices you make, and take care not to re-route wires closer to a heat source than originally intended. Battery cables must be especially tight and corrosion-free to prevent "sizzling."
- Be careful when smoking. A fallen lit cigarette or butt can smoulder for hours to start a fire in a parked vehicle.
- Watch where you park. A hot engine of a car or truck parked on grass can start a fire especially if the catalytic converter touches dry grass.
- Follow the proper procedures for filling propane tanks. One of the most important safety rules with propane fuelled vehicles is, "NEVER OVER-FILL A PROPANE TANK."
- In its natural state, propane is colourless and odourless. Commercially available propane is odourized to smell like boiling cabbage or rotten eggs, so leaks can be detected. When a leak is detected remove all sources of ignition - lit cigarettes, matches and avoid turning on the radio, using the phone or using light switches nearby.
- Before servicing propane fuelled vehicles ensure there are no leaks in the system and that the tank is not overfilled.
- Keep propane tanks on a maintenance schedule to ensure the tanks, their supports and valves show no evidence of damage or deterioration. The sudden rupture of a rusted and weakened tank would result in a very large fire ball that no one nearby would survive.

What if you do have a fire?

If a fire does start, your quick response can dramatically reduce injuries and fatalities. If you discover a fire while driving, experts recommend these steps:

- Stop on the side of the road as soon and as safely as possible.
- Turn off the ignition. While the ignition is on, the fuel pump may continue to pump fuel to the fire.
- Evacuate everyone quickly. The fire can spread rapidly, and produce highly toxic fumes.
- Get far away and call 911 or the nearest emergency service number. Don't go after valuables or try to fight the fire. Just get away. The car will be a loss, but unless you have experience dealing with a car fire, there is little chance you will put it out. And you run the risk of being overcome by fumes. Above all, do not open the hood. You risk not only burning your hand, but also feeding oxygen to the fire and creating a fireball.
- Don't try to put the fire out yourself - wait for the professionals.

Wildland fires – a rural reality

Forest and prairie wildfires are capable of spreading at an astonishing rate. Crowning wildfires often spread at rates of seven kilometres per hour, and can potentially send embers as far as two kilometres ahead of the fire. Wind blown prairie fires can travel at speeds in excess of 10 kilometres per hour.

In Alberta, 40 per cent of wildfires are caused by human activity. The remaining 60 per cent are sparked naturally by lightning.

Over the last 10 years, an average of 1,000 wildfires a year have burned 190,000 hectares of forest annually in Alberta. Wildfires have forced the evacuation of thousands of people from their communities, and have even destroyed some homes.

If you live in or near a forested area, sooner or later you may have to contend with the spread of a wildfire. The best way to protect yourself against loss, damage or injury is to practice FireSmart principles on your property. These principles are provided in the FireSmart Home Owner's Manual, to help you reduce that risk:

For more information contact the **Alberta Sustainable Resource Development** Information Centre:

Alberta Sustainable Resource Development
Information Centre
Main Floor, 9920 - 108 Street
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5K 2M4
1-780-944-0313
srd.infocent@gov.ab.ca

For information about protecting your home and community from wildfire, order a copy of "FireSmart, Protecting Your Community from Wildfire." Copies are available from Partners in Protection.

Please phone (780) 435-7283 or visit

<http://www.partnersinprotection.ab.ca/downloads/index.shtml> or visit your local Alberta Sustainable Resource Development office for more information.

For **information on wildfire** in Alberta, visit www.srd.alberta.ca/wildfires

For **fire ban information** in Alberta, visit www.albertafirebans.ca

To report a wildfire call 310-FIRE

If you have any information about the cause of a wildfire, call **Crime Stoppers** at 1-800-222-TIPS or (1-800-222-8477). If you are responsible for starting a wildfire you can be charged under the Forest and Prairie Protection Act, and be held responsible for the costs associated with fighting the wildfire.

Prevent wildland fires

It's that time of year again, wildfire season, and Albertans are being reminded to burn with caution. Last year there were nearly 1,300 wildfires in the Forest Protection Area that burned more than 103,000 hectares of land. The government would like to bring this number down drastically. Permits are required to conduct any burning activity other than lighting a campfire, during fire season. Permits are free and available at any Alberta Sustainable Resource Development office.

The risk of wildland fires is high during the warmer months in Alberta. Wildland fires in forested areas and grasslands are of even greater concern when they burn near residential, industrial or agricultural developments. Most people know to be careful with matches and cigarettes and to follow safe burning practices when cleaning up garbage and debris. Listed below are additional steps that homeowners in wildland or grassland settings can take to safeguard their homes against wildfire.

- Clear the roof and gutters of needles and leaves.
- Keep the area within 10 metres of buildings free of flammable vegetation. This fuel-free zone provides firefighters with a defensible space to assist in stopping a wildfire's spread.
- Vegetation beyond the 10 metre defensible zone should be species that are less flammable like Aspen, Birch, Poplar and the Western Larch.
- Situate firewood, combustible debris, wooden outbuildings and fences at least 10 metres from buildings.
- Locate burning barrels at least 15 metres from buildings or flammable material. Barrels must be screened to control sparks.
- Keep vegetation and combustible material away from propane tanks.
- Contact your utility company to clear vegetation within a tree length of overhead power lines.
- Keep firefighting tools on hand. A shovel, rake, sprinkler, roof-top ladder and hose that reach to the roof are essential.

Fire Bans

During the summer months, warm and dry conditions can lead to a fire ban. Fire bans are issued when wildfires are likely to ignite and are issued to protect you and your community. The province, your county, municipal district or municipality can implement fire bans depending on your area and local jurisdiction. A fire ban may prohibit all burning, but may allow certain exceptions such as gas BBQs or small campfires. To determine if there is a fire ban in your area, you can:

- Check www.albertafirebans.ca
- Call 1-866-FYI-FIRE
- Contact your local municipality office or fire department

Off Highway Vehicles (OHV)

Each year, thousands of people visit Alberta's forests to enjoy their stunning, natural beauty while taking part in a number of recreational activities. Unfortunately, increased recreational activity has contributed to an increase in the number of wildfires. In Alberta, four out of every 10 wildfires are caused by human activity. As the popularity of OHVs increases, so do the number of wildfires they cause.

Many people don't realize that OHVs can start wildfires. The exhaust system on OHVs can heat up to temperatures in excess of 204°C. At these temperatures any debris, such as grass, located near the exhaust can ignite. This smouldering debris can then fall from the OHV and potentially start a wildfire. To reduce the risk:

- Before you ride, inspect your OHV and clear out any debris that has built up near the exhaust and under the seat.
- After riding through muskeg or tall grassy areas, stop and remove any potential fire starting debris. Dispose of hot debris safely by making sure it is extinguished.
- Always carry a small fire extinguisher and collapsible shovel.
- Wash your OHV regularly and stay out of streams and creeks.
- Ensure the muffler and spark arresters on your OHV are in good working condition. Any alterations to the factory components of an OHV can greatly increase the chance of starting a wildfire.

Don't be the cause of a wildfire

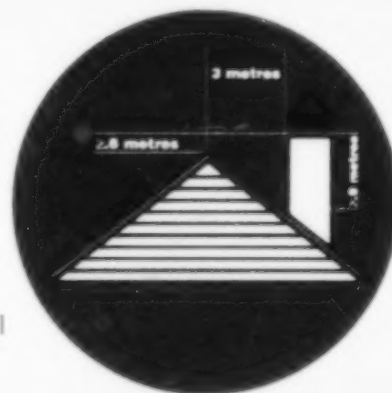
Wildfires often start as small accidental ignitions. By using FireSmart standards (www.partnersinprotection.ab.ca/downloads/index.shtml) around your property you can help prevent an accidental wildfire from starting.

FireSmart your chimney

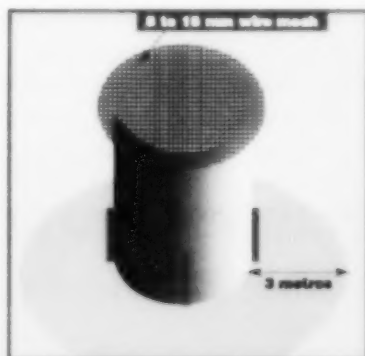
Chimneys should be constructed to meet Alberta building code requirements and have approved spark arrestors installed.

Burn barrels and fire pits

Burn barrels and fire pits should be located away from buildings and other combustible material. Always ensure your burn barrel has proper ventilation and is covered with a screen. Never leave your burning barrel or fire pit unattended while it is in use. For a safer method of disposal bring your debris to a local landfill site.



Power lines and propane tanks Vegetation should be cleared away from power lines, propane tanks and other fuel supplies.



Contact your utility company to clear away vegetation around overhead electrical installations.

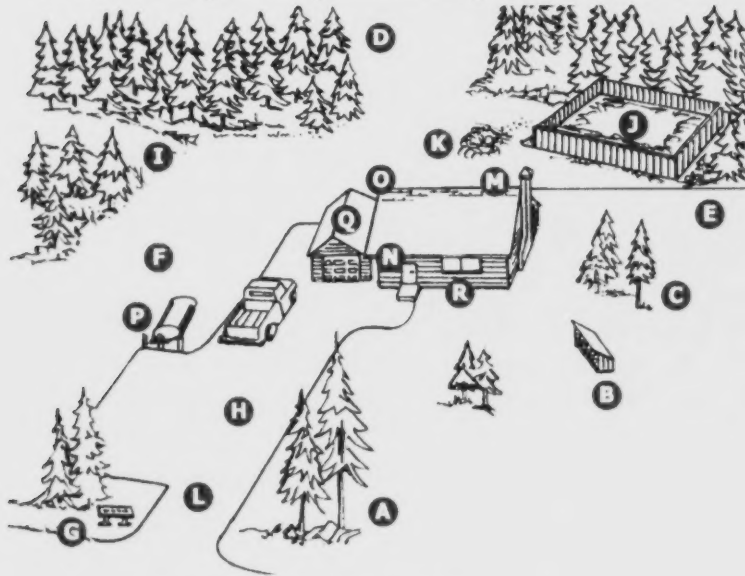
Emergency facilities

Ensure your property has adequate emergency vehicle access and an on-site emergency water supply, such as a pond, tank, creek or lake.

On-site fire tools

Every home should have shovels, rakes, axes, garden hoses, sprinklers and ladders to assist in suppressing wildfires and protecting homes.

A well thought out protection plan for wild fires



1. Prune tree branches to a minimum height of two metres
2. Store firewood a minimum of 10 metres from any structures (avoid down slope location)
3. Remove all combustible trees, long grass, shrubs, logs, branches, twigs and needles within 10 metres of a structure
4. Thin trees (with 3-6 metres between crowns) for at least 30 metres from any structure
5. Contact your utility company if trees or branches are not clear of power lines
6. Keep grass within 10 metres of buildings mowed and watered
7. Have your address, municipal fire number or lot number clearly visible for quick identification by fire services
8. Make sure your driveway is wide enough to accommodate emergency vehicles so they have enough space to turn around
9. Provide an alternate emergency access route to and from your property
10. Pond or tank with emergency water supply
11. FireSmart your fire pit or burning barrel
12. Clear your driveway of trees to a distance of at least 3 metres on either side
13. Make sure your chimney is to code and has spark arrestor screens installed
14. Close in your eaves, vents, and soffits
15. Sheath undersides of balconies, decks and crawlspaces with flame resistant materials
16. Locate propane tanks at least 10 metres from any building and clear vegetation at least three metres around propane tanks
17. Use only Class A, B, or C rated fire resistant roofing and fire resistant exterior siding
18. Solid shutters or metal firescreens will provide increased fire protection for windows and doors.

Adapted from: The Homeowners Firesmart Manual. Third Edition.(ISBN# 0-7785-3622-X; Publication No. 1/189). Alberta Sustainable Resource Development.

Burn Barrels

In many areas of Alberta, burn barrels are commonly used to dispose of debris. While they are a convenient tool, burn barrels must be used responsibly to avoid starting a wild fire. The Southern Alberta prairie fire on December 14, 1997 was started by a burn barrel. The barrel was screened but briefly unattended. A sudden wind tipped it over. This fire destroyed six homes, five small bridges and many farm properties and powerlines.

If you plan on using a burn barrel during fire season (April 1 to October 31) in the Forest Protection Area, you need to get a fire permit. Fire Permits are available from your local Alberta Sustainable Resource Development office by calling toll free 310-0000.

Preparing a burn barrel

- Always cover your burn barrel with 6 centimetre (1/4") or smaller metal mesh screen.
- Clear away any debris for at least 3metre (10 feet) around your burn barrel and work up the area to expose the soil
- Position your burn barrel at least 30 meters (100 feet) away from any structure or standing timber
- When conditions are extremely hot and dry, a fire ban can be issued. When this occurs your burn barrel permit is no longer valid
- Once a fire ban is lifted, you must contact your local Alberta Sustainable Resource Development office to have another permit issued.

Conduct a safe burn

- Never burn in windy conditions. Only burn when you can barely feel a breeze
- Light the burn barrel in the late evening. Try to avoid burning during the heat of the day
- NEVER leave the fire in your burn barrel unattended.
- Keep firefighting tools nearby to help put out any small fires. Keep a shovel, rake, axe, small car-size fire extinguisher and plenty of water near by.

What you can't burn

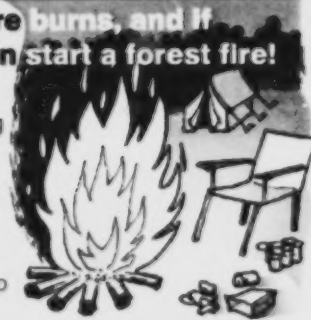
Preserved wood; material from automobile bodies and tires; rubber or plastic used oil, animal manure, pathological waste, and waste from sawmills or planning mills.

Adapted from: Wildfire Prevention: Burn Barrels. ISBN 0-7785-2923-Pub. No I/124. Alberta Sustainable Resource Development.

Camping Fire Safety

A fire can inflict severe burns, and if uncontrolled may even start a forest fire!

- * Teach children camp fire safety, before going camping
- * Build campfires downwind and several metres away from a tent
- * Have water, sand or a fire extinguisher in case the camp fire gets out of control
- * Fully extinguish campfires before leaving a campsite or retiring for the night
- * Buy tents made of flame-resistant fabric. Remember, they are not fireproof
- * Use battery-operated lanterns and not candles, matches or open flames inside the tent.



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BBQ Fire Safety Tips

Propane and natural gas are safe when used properly.

- * Buy appliances that are certified and labeled by a recognized agency such as CSA or UL/ULC.
- * Clean, maintain and do a routine safety check when using BBQ appliances
- * Use the "soap-bubble test" to detect and correct gas leaks
- * Keep BBQ at a safe distance from buildings, decks, fences and combustibles
- * Keep a fire extinguisher, baking soda or water nearby in case of fire
- * Never use gasoline to speed up a solid fuel BBQ



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Prevent Arson in Your Community

* One in five fires in Alberta is deliberately set by arsonists or vandals

* Most commonly, buildings vacant/under construction, schools, outdoor properties, malls, churches and dumpsters are targeted

* Work with your local fire and police services to prevent these fires

* Arson and vandalism are punishable offences under the Criminal Code

* Report any suspicious activity to authorities



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